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Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 221512Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1984
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 3138

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR SU ET SO FT
SUBJECT: SITUATION IN NORTHEAST AFRICA

REF: STATE 34960

1. SECRETARY'S VANCE'S VISIT AND PREOCCUPATION OF KEY GOE OFFICIALS WITH PREPARATIONS FOR AFRICAN MEETINGS LEADING UP TO AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT MARCH 7, HAVE DELAYED EMBOFF'S APPOINTMENTS TO DISCUSS SITUATION IN NORTHEAST AFRICA AS REQUESTED REFTEL. EMBOFFS CALLED FEB. 22 ON ACTING DIRECTOR MFA AFRICAN DEPARTMENT ISMAIL SADIQ. POLCOUNS SAID NEW ADMINISTRATION IN PROCESS OF FORMULATING POLICY TOWARD RAPDILY EVOLVING SITUATION IN HORN OF AFRICA AND WOULD WELCOME ANY VIEWS GOE MIGHT WISH TO SHARE WITH US. SADIQ DIDNOT APPEAR TOO WELL INFORMED AND SEEMED MORE RELUCTANT THAN MOST MFA OFFICIALS TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS FRANKLY. HIS COMMENTS SHOULD THEREFORE BE CONSIDERED AS INTERIM RESPONSE TO REFTEL. POLCOUNS PLANS TO CALL ON SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL DEALING WITH AFRICAN AFFAIRS, UNDERSECRETARY AHMAD OSMAN, ON
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FEBRUARY 23 OR 24 TO GO OVER SAME SUBJECTS. FOLLOWING ARE SADIQ'S COMMENTS:

2. ETHIOPIA. ETHIOPIA IS MOST DESTABLIZING ELEMENT IN CURRENT SITUATION. GOE HAD HAD INFORMATION THAT MENGISTU HAD ACTED AGAINST GENERAL TEFERI "BEFORE HE GOT RID OF MENGISTU." "PRO-SOVIET" MENGUISTU HAS PROVEN A SHREWED CONSPIRATOR AND IS NOW

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DOMINATING THE SITUATION. HOWEVER, THIS MAY BE SHORT-LIVED
SINCE SITUATION VERY MURKY. GOE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT
REPORTS THAT ETHIOPIA ABOUT TO OBTAIN SOVIET ARMS AND PERLEXED
OVER SOVIETS APPARENTLY SUCCEEDING IN BECOMING FRIENDLY WITH
BOTH SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA. THEY DOUBT THAT THIS POLICY CAN
SUCCEED. GOE EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET ENCROACHMENT
IN ETHIOPIA AND URGES US TO ACT TO PREVENT ANOTHER ANGOLA.
SADIQ OFFERED NO SPEFICI COURSE OF ACTION FOR US.

3. ERITREA. SADIQ THOUGHT MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE OF MENGISTU
AT THIS TIME WAS TO OBTAIN ARMS TO FIGHT IN ERITREA SINCE "85
PERCENT OF TERRITORY NOW HELD BY THE REBELS." GOE FULLY
EXPECTS ETHIOPIA WILL TABLE COMPLAINT IN LOME AGAINST SUDAN FOR
SUPPORT OF ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE, NO MATTER HOW TEPID THE RESPONSEM
IF ETHIOPIANS BROUGHT UP MATTER, MOST AFRICANS WOULD BE CONTENT
TO SAY IT WAS ETHIOPIAN-SUDANESE QUESTION OR, POSSIBLY, INTERNAL
ETHIOPIAN PROBLEM. MANHY BLACK AFRICAN STATES BELIEVE SOME ARABS
SUPPORTING ERITREAN SEPARATIST MOVEMENT ON MUSLIM VS. CHRISTIAN
BASIS AND AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT LIKELY TO AVOID RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY,
SINCE WHOLE PURPOSE OF SUMMIT IS TO EXPLORE WAYS TO FOSTER
COOPERATION RATHER THAN TO RAISE DIVISIVE QUESTIONS.

4. TRANSFER OF OAU HEADQUARTERS. THIS IS A SMALL MOVE "LED
BY LIBYA" AND SUPPORTED BY SOMALIA BUT UNLIKELY TO LEAD ANYWHERE.

5. DJBOUTI. TWO WEEKS AGO DJBOUTI LEADERS HASSAN GOULED AND
AHMAD DINI VISITED CAIRO AND SAW FONMIN FAHMY AMONG OTHERS. THEY
EXPRESSED STRONG CONVICTION THAT SOMALIA POSED NO REAL THREAT TO
TFAI INDEPENDENCE BUT RASIED FEARS OF ETHIOPIA'S MOVING FROM
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SUBSERSION TO ARMED ATTACK AFTER INDEPENDENCE. EGYPTIANS,
STILL WORRIED BOTH ABOUT SOMALI INTENTIONS
AND POSSIBLE ETHIOPIAN DEPRIDATIONS, APPARENTLY
MADE STRONG CASE FOR CONTINUING FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE, WHICH
THEY CONSIDER NECESSARY FOR PROTECTION FOR TFAI INDEPENDENCE
"IN MUCH MORE THAN TRAINING CAPACITY." GOULED AND DINI
UNHAPPY RE POSSIBILITY OF FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE WHICH WOULD
IMPINGE ON FULL TFAI SOVEREIGNTY, BUT AGREED, AT LEAST TO THEIR
GOE INTERLOCUTORS, TO ACCEPT FRENCH PRESENCE AS NECESSARY EVIL.
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